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Educational Writings

REVIEWS AND BOOK NOTES

Handbook for measurements.—There is increasing evidence that the over-enthusiasm for measurements which has characterized recent educational activity has encountered a somewhat serious check in the sober second thought of the more serious thinkers on education. The indiscriminate multiplication of tests is not regarded with the same approbation as was given a year or two ago. Questions are now being raised more frequently as to just what is being measured, what is the validity of the results, and especially as to the use to be made of the results. If measurement scales are to secure a permanent place among the tools of education, they must submit to a very searching analysis and criticism.

In a recent book by Wilson and Hoke¹ there is evidence that, in at least two particulars, writers on measurements are becoming aware of the more serious problems involved. This book gives clear recognition, first, that it is no longer desirable to continue in the rapid and indiscriminate multiplication of similar tests, but that the process of selection should be applied to the tests already at hand. The second general recognition is that the chief purpose to be served by the tests is the diagnosis of pupil ability and pupil difficulty.

The book is designed primarily as a handbook for teachers in the administration of the tests. The major portion of the space is given to the discussion of those tests which have been found to be most serviceable to the classroom teacher. The principal tests in each school subject are reviewed, detailed directions for use are given, results are analyzed and their values for diagnosis are considered. The dominant emphasis throughout these chapters, however, is not upon the tests themselves but upon the progress of the pupil as aided by the use of the tests. The point of view of the writers is well expressed in the following paragraph:

We are now quite surely approaching a third stage of development, and that is the stage in which the tests shall be thoroughly weighed and judged as to the fundamental considerations of curricula-making involved, whether they are or are not testing desirable school products, and whether their use will or will not lead to better methods of teaching and better selection of subject-matter. In this stage the standard tests will be used more and more for the diagnosis of the weaknesses of individual

¹ G. M. WILSON and KREMER J. HOKE, *How to Measure*. New York: Macmillan Co., 1920. Pp. vii+285.

pupils, more and more in testing the efficiency of methods of teaching. It is in this third stage that the rank and file of the teaching profession are necessarily involved. If the tests are to be of service, not merely as a general measure of the efficiency of a school system, but also of service *to the teacher* and *for the pupils* in the schoolroom, then it becomes necessary that the individual teacher shall master the details for actually using the tests in her own schoolroom [p. 3].

The book has been recommended as a handbook for the classroom teacher and also as a text for classes in normal schools and colleges. As a handbook for the teacher it is probably the best now available. As a text for normal schools and colleges it contains the concrete material necessary to familiarize a class with the details of measurement, but it is lacking in the serious critical treatment of the fundamental issues of measurements which would seem essential for such students. This omission emphasizes the need of a supplementary book which would confine its treatment to the problem of critically evaluating in a scientific manner the series of questions which need to be raised regarding the whole measuring movement.

Psychology for teacher-training schools.—Psychology is considered one of the basic sciences for education. It is still a question, however, as to just when and how it should be given in a course for the preparation of teachers. The simple requirement of a course in general psychology often fails to provide a background which can be applied when the student begins to study education proper. The broad and general nature of psychology has been recognized in a few schools by the differentiating of introductory courses for students whose principal interests are medicine, social science, or business. In an attempt to provide for a similar recognition of the interests of students of education, Professor La Rue has written an introductory psychology text¹ which is focused upon the particular problems of the teacher.

The organization of the book departs somewhat from the general method of treatment. The author states that this modification of method is due to the attempt to treat psychology 'psychologically'. The subject is covered in two general divisions. In the first of these, "which gives an airplane view of the entire science, causing its larger features to stand out, there are developed a few simple laws which, applied throughout the book, effectively organize and simplify the whole complex subject" (p. 6). The method in this division is an example of the author's attempt to apply psychology to itself. This method consists in:

(1) passing from the familiar picture of man in his common environment to a study, with genetic sidelights, of "Body, Brain, and Mind," (2) showing the relation of adjustment between "The Mental and the Environmental," and (3) explaining, in the study of "Mind, Nervous System, and Behavior," how the neuro-mental governing and steering system accomplishes its complex task of adjustment. In

¹ DANIEL WOLFORD LA RUE, *Psychology for Teachers*. New York: American Book Co., 1920. Pp. 316.